

4th Sunday of Advent

December 19, 2021



Fourth Sunday of Advent



Plymouth United Church of Christ Rev. David Huber, Pastor

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The Family of God Gathers

Gathering Music *Please let the prelude be a signal to prepare for worship.*

“O Little Town of Bethlehem” Arr. Gary Lanier
John Stecher, Lynn McFadyen

Greetings

Advent Candle Lighting—Love †

- L: Siblings in Christ, be not afraid, for now—even now!—God’s love is overwhelming the world, on earth as it is in heaven.
- P: **The prophet Micah spoke of God’s love when the Israelites were facing their own turbulent times: “But you, O Bethlehem of Ephrathah, who are one of the little clans of Judah, from you shall come forth for me one who is to rule in Israel. And they shall live secure, for now he shall be great to the ends of the earth; and he shall be the one of peace.” (Micah 5:2, 5a)**
- L: Our neighbors wander in the wilderness, too many are trapped in valleys of the shadow of death, our conversations are laced with too many wounding words, too many people suffer, and we’re often too distracted or self-centered to make room in our hearts to be God’s loving neighbors.
- P: **But love shines in the darkness and sings in the shadows. It does not cower and cannot be contained. It is the hope of the saints and the call of the prophets.**
- L: Today we stop everything and light these candles: one for hope, one for peace, one for joy, and the last one for love. Love was the fire in the belly of John the Baptist and Love was the courage of mother Mary. Love will lead us home.
- P: **May the light from these candles overwhelm the apathy, hate, and divisiveness of the world. May they light the valleys of the shadow of death. May the light and fire from these candles burn away all our excuses, all our hesitations, all our elaborate justifications that prevent God’s love from being born among us. Let these lights inspire us to make our hearts, our lives, our church, a stable for God’s love to grow and expand into all the recesses of this world which God loves so much.**

Advent Invocation Verses 1 & 3

“Make of My Heart a Stable”

Make of my heart a sta-ble, a house for the Ho-ly, a warm and stur-dy
Make of my life a sta-ble, a house for the Ho-ly, a warm and stur-dy
Make of our church a sta-ble, a house for the Ho-ly, a warm and stur-dy
place for hope/peace/joy/love to live and grow.
place for hope/peace/joy/love to live and grow.
place for hope/peace/joy/love to live and grow.

Text and music: Amanda Udis-Kessler

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The Service of the Word

Psalms 80:1–7

L: Give ear, O Shepherd of Israel, you who lead Joseph like a flock!

P: **You who are enthroned upon the cherubim, shine forth before Ephraim and Benjamin and Manasseh.**

L: Stir up your might, and come to save us!

P: **Restore us, O God; let your face shine, that we may be saved.**

L: O Lord God of hosts, how long will you be angry with your people's prayers?

P: **You have fed them with the bread of tears, and given them tears to drink in full measure.**

L: You make us the scorn of our neighbors; our enemies laugh among themselves.

P: **Restore us, O God of hosts; let your face shine, that we may be saved.**

Hymn 105 Bulletin page 7

“Gentle Joseph, Joseph Dear”

Gospel

Matthew 1:18–24

Now the birth of Jesus the Messiah took place in this way. When his mother Mary had been engaged to Joseph, but before they lived together, she was found to be with child from the Holy Spirit. Her husband Joseph, being a righteous man and unwilling to expose her to public disgrace, planned to dismiss her quietly. But just when he had resolved to do this, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream and said, “Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary as your wife, for the child conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit. She will bear a son, and you are to

name him Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins.” All this took place to fulfill what had been spoken by the Lord through the prophet:

“Look, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son,
and they shall name him Emmanuel,”

which means, “God is with us.” When Joseph awoke from sleep, he did as the angel of the Lord commanded him; he took her as his wife...

Sermon

Sermon Hymn 150 Verses 1–3 Bulletin page 8

“Sing a Different Song”

Offering

“The First Noel” Arr. Gordon Ring
John Stecher, Lynn McFadyen

Doxology

**Praise God from whom all blessings flow
Praise God all creatures here below
Praise God above ye heavenly host
Creator, Christ, and Holy Ghost. Amen.**

Prayer of Dedication of Gifts and Self †§

You deliver us, O God, from exile, separation, and despair into communion with each other, with you, and with your good news. Thank you for all that draws us close together. Accept our gifts as signs of our gratitude. Bless them to your use, and bless us with loving wisdom, to use them for the sake of those who stand in need. Amen.

Joys and Concerns

Prayers of the People

Lord’s Prayer

Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our debts as we forgive our debtors. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever. Amen.

Closing Hymn Verses 1 & 5

“The First Nowell”

**The first Nowell, the angel did say,
Was to certain poor shepherds in fields as they lay;
In fields where they lay keeping their sheep,
On a cold winter’s night that was so deep.**

Refrain:

**Nowell, Nowell, Nowell, Nowell,
Born is the King of Israel.**

**Then entered in those wise men three,
Full reverently upon their knee,
And offered there, in his presence,
Their gold and myrrh and frankincense. *Refrain***

Benediction ☩

**L: May God’s Door of Welcome swing open in your heart and in your life.
P: May Christ’s humble first dwelling remind you of the plenty you already know.
L: And may the Spirit lead you into more possibility and hospitality than you can imagine, making room in The Inn for all.
P: May it be so for you. May it be so for us. May it be so for this church.
All: Amen.**

Sung Benediction Verse 7

“O Come, O Come, Emmanuel”

**O come, Desire of Nations, bind all peoples in one heart and mind;
Make envy, strife, and quarrels cease;
fill the whole world with heaven’s peace.
Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel shall come to you, O Israel!**

Postlude

“O Christmas Tree”
Arr. Sandra Eithun

† *Feasting on the Word* Worship Companion, Year C, Vol. 1 ©2012 Westminster John Knox Press. Used with permission.

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† adapted from SaltProject, used by permission, and the Christmas Appeal Candle Light Liturgy, used by permission of Christian Aid, and David Huber

† <http://lectionarylitanies.blogspot.com>

§ Modified/written by Rev. David Huber

Worship Leaders

Pastor: Rev. David Huber • Ministers: All the people of Plymouth • Pianist: Lynn McFadyen

We of Plymouth extend to you our hand of fellowship and an invitation to become a member. If you are interested, or have any questions, please speak with or send a note to Pastor David or our Moderator, Barb Kleist. Our table always has room for more.

Cross illumination for December is sponsored by John & Sandy Moore in honor of their 54th wedding anniversary.

This Week at Plymouth

Sunday, December 19

OCWM offering

10:00 A.M. Coffee

10:30 A.M. Worship

Friday, December 24

6:00 P.M. Family Service of
Lessons and Carols

Sunday, December 26

10:30 A.M. Worship

Online only

We pray for:

- All UCC missionaries and ordained and licensed ministers; the ministry and mission of the UCC and the Church universal

During December we are collecting food through December 19 for St. Francis Food Pantry. They are not putting together holiday meal kits, but traditional holiday foods would be welcome, such as: instant potatoes or stuffing; gravy packets/jars; canned vegetables; cream soups for casseroles; cake mix (or cornbread, muffins, or cupcakes); frosting; sprinkles; hot cocoa; canned fruit cocktail. Your donations need not be limited to these—all food items can be used. Money is also helpful. It allows them to buy more food from Feed My People than we could buy with the same money, but because of shortages and supply issues, they don't always have access to things that they would like, so food donations are helpful, too. Please bring your items to the church, and we will deliver them after December 19.

Gentle Joseph, Joseph Dear

Matt. 1:18-25

German carol, 15th century
Paraphr. by Carol Birkland, 1993

Unison
E \flat B \flat /E \flat E \flat

1 "Gen - tle - Jo - seph, Jo - seph dear, stay with me, for the
2 "Glad - ly Mar - y, Mar - y mine, I will cra - dle the
3 "Peace to all and God's good-will," heaven and earth with this

B \flat /E \flat Fm Fm7 B \flat 7

ba - by's near; God will sure - ly your good - ness hear, as
child di - vine; Here will heav - en and earth com - bine, for
song will fill; Soon will God, in the eve - ning still, be

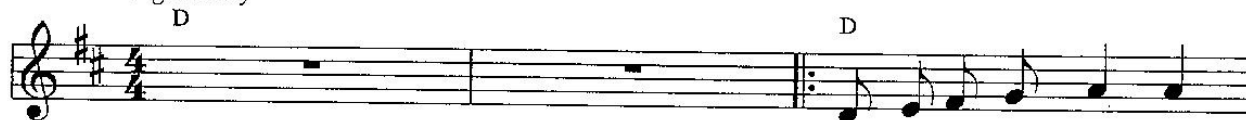
Gm Cm Fm/A \flat B \flat A \flat /E \flat E \flat

you will love this new - born child," says Mar - y.
you will bear God's child, O dear - est Mar - y."
born in Beth - le - hem, the child of Mar - y.

The German carol on which this is based appears in a mystery play, c. 1500. It is one of a group of related carols that also includes "In dulci jubilo"—"Good Christian friends, rejoice."

Tune: JOSEPH LIEBER, JOSEPH MEIN 7.8.8.11.
German carol, 15th century
Harm. The New Century Hymnal, 1993

Sing a Different Song

*Isa. 9:2, 6-7; 42:10-11; Matt. 1:23**The Iona Community, 1987; alt.**Vigorously*

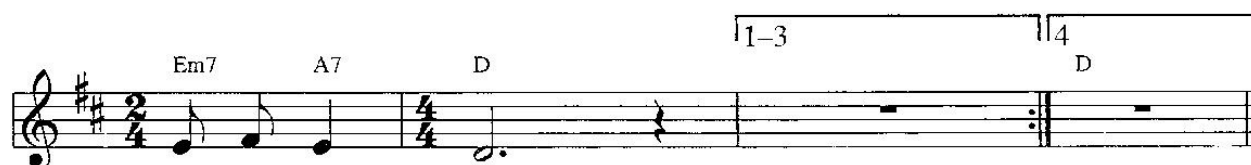
- 1 Sing a dif-ferent song now
- 2 Shout a dif-ferent shout now
- 3 Love a dif-ferent love now
- 4 Dance a dif-ferent dance now



near:	The Mes - si - ah is	born in the
cheer:	Fill the earth and the	sky with the
fear:	With the hum - ble and	poor, with the
fear:	Peace and jus - tice are	one, in the



face of our	scorn,	sing a dif-ferent song	to
news from on	high,	shout a dif-ferent shout	that
shy and un -	sure,	love a dif-ferent love.	Let
light of the	sun.	Dance a dif-ferent dance.	God's



wel-come and	warm.
all may come	by.
Christ be the	cure!
reign has be -	gun!

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This lively new carol from The Iona Community of Scotland can be accompanied by drums and tambourines to enhance its dance-like quality. The text invites enthusiastic participation in celebrating the Christmas event.

Tune: DIFFERENT SONG 10.10.6.6.10.
John L. Bell, 1987

Who we are...

Plymouth UCC is an Open and Affirming congregation, embracing diversity and affirming the dignity and worth of every person, since we are all created in God's image. We welcome into full membership and participation in the Body of Christ persons of every race, ethnic background, age, gender identity and expression, sexual orientation, physical or mental ability, socio-economic background, marital status and background. We welcome all to share in the life, leadership, ministry, fellowship, worship, sacraments, responsibilities, humor, and blessings of participation in our congregation.

Spiritual Care Package

Question for Reflection

Where do you see the light of Christ magnified in your person, your life, and the ways of your family and community? Notice in the coming week one time each day when the light of Christ is made present for you by others.

Household Prayer: Morning

Thank you, good and gracious God, for the morning light, for another day in which to live out what it means that you have magnified my soul and the souls of those around me in this world. Teach me the meaning of "Let it be." Show me how to trust; in Jesus' name. Amen.

Household Prayer: Evening

Good and gracious God, we give you thanks that you have made incarnate in your world the breath of life, the life of hope. Keep us safe throughout the night that in the morning we may again rejoice and live in peace with all creation; in Jesus' name. Amen.

God is still speaking,